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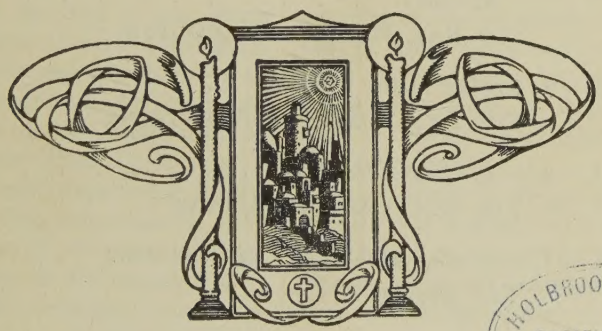

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Gaius Glenn Atkins, D.D., L.H.D.
Editor

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The Practical Training of the Christian Minister

An address given at the Connecticut Alumni Meeting, Yale University Divinity School

The Rev. Ralph L. Woodward
Assistant Dean

MOST men in the active parish ministry are dissatisfied with the amount and type of practical training received during their seminary course. In one way or another most clergymen have found their practical training inadequate for the wide range of experiences actually met in parish practice. As time passes some men faced with many new problems and a sense of being inadequate for them become inclined to feel that their seminary should have foreseen these problems and given them more adequate training. However, it should be noted that a great deal of the practical instruction given at seminary did not impress or "take" at the time it was given to the young student due to the limited range of experience and his inability to comprehend the significance of the teaching. This feeling of the inadequacy of practical training is primarily due to a growing maturity and experience in the actual pastorate. The experienced minister is more aware of the need of truly competent workmen in the ministry.

To speak of the seminary course as being divided into the so-called "content" and "practical" subjects as though they were separate divisions of preparation is somewhat unreal. As a matter of fact they complement each other in the training process and must be planned and offered in the curriculum so that there is a basic integral relation. Today it is seldom that one hears any faculty member in seminary speaking as though the "content" course or the "practical" course is the main or only thing that a man needs in connection with his training. There is ample evidence from the past that the man trained only in one or the other is seldom able to transmit the Christian message with conviction to others. It is seldom that one hears any of the old arguments of a generation or so ago against practical training. However, a year or so ago while visiting with the faculty of one theological school and discussing some of the problems of practical training, one professor did arise and say that he felt that theological training ought to be completely apart from the world and as though the world did not exist, and then stalked out of the discussion. His fellow professors then apologized and emphasized that such was not their point of view. The ivory-tower philosophy of training is a thing of the past. We are concerned with the whole training of the candidate for the ministry that he might be a workman with knowledge and understanding of the Christian gospel and ability to impart that knowledge to others in the building of a Christian fellowship.

In speaking of the practical training of men for the ministry we must assume that a man has, or is getting, a deep religious purpose, adequate general background, and such knowledge of the Christian religion as will make all practical training serve as a tool and a skill for interpreting, revealing, and teaching the Christian life. Practical training must never be regarded as a substitute for an understanding of the source and nature of our Christian heritage and its pertinence for contemporary life; or of the social scene where religious work is to be done; or knowledge of what it does to and demands of the religious spirit.

In addition to this basic religious core a man receiving practical training must have to be getting "an understanding of the process by which the Christian religion may make its contribution to contempo-

rary life and how religious institutions may increase in strength and effectiveness," and an understanding of human nature and the way that people learn. This understanding of the processes for implementing the Christian teaching is the first step in effective practical training. Unless the basic principles of the processes by which Christian work is carried on are understood, practical methods will be useful for only a short time.

I

What are the areas of the minister's work where practical training is needed? If one approaches the minister's job functionally, a number of broad areas of practical work can easily be seen. For the purposes of this discussion I have listed these functions under seven areas as follows:

1. Leading worship and preaching the Christian message.
2. Providing pastoral care and counsel for people of various ages and situations.
3. Maintaining and conducting an educational program in the Christian life and message for adults, youth, and children.
4. Administering the church and its program.
5. Carrying a program of evangelism throughout the local parish. Today evangelism demands getting outside the church to the people.
6. Community work through other agencies and institutions of the area.
7. Cooperative interdenominational and larger church or denominational responsibilities.

Across these general functions are a number of specific tasks that operate through two or more of the above functions. In these, too, it is necessary to provide specific practical training if our ministry is to meet the needs of the present day. The most important of these specific tasks is that of inspiring, recruiting, and training of leaders. Training is also needed in stewardship, methods of meeting social and economic change in the community, or if such change is needed in the parish, knowledge of bringing such change about. The minister must be aware of methods of making evangelism in the world-wide sense and the larger mission of the church operate within the local community.

In addition to these general training requirements needed for fulfilling the regular functions of a Christian ministry there is a constant demand on the part of men who are in the active ministry and of candidates for the ministry for more specialized training within the limits of certain of the functional areas. For instance, the obvious need and demand for more work in clinical training in order that the minister may be able to provide better care and counsel for the emotionally restless and the mentally disturbed has grown until most seminaries make some provision for this type of training. Emphasis upon training in survey and analysis of communities and parish areas in order that a strategy for church work might be reached is constantly requested. The need for instruction in parliamentary procedure for more effective administration of public and group meetings is evident. A long list of the requests of special training for various aspects of the ministry could easily be compiled. There are requests for more work in recreation so that the minister might be more effective in providing for adult and youth in their social fellowship and leisure time. There is a demand for more work in counseling in order that a minister may be more effective in his counseling of the people of his parish. There is a constant call for more specialized training for types of parish work such as urban, rural, industrial, suburban, or college and university settings. The need for more training in radio, television, and religious journalism is frequently mentioned. Special training for growing areas of the Christian ministry such as council of church-executive secretaries, institutional chaplaincies, etc., is also needed.

Occasionally candidates for the ministry re sure that the seminary should provide nore emphasis in homecoming, church ublicity, photography, drama, etiquette, r even dancing. Several years ago one tudent seeking a conference regarding is course of study announced that he anted to take the course that would pre- are him to become a bishop. Seriously, he demand for and the need of special aining for more specialized types of the inistry is one of the most perplexing, ersistent, and difficult problems of pres- nt-day work in training of men for the hristian ministry. The range of respon- bilities that must be undertaken by the arish minister has grown out of all pro- portion to the responsibilities laid upon nen in other professions. It is simply npossible for a candidate for the min- stry to prepare in any one phase of the astoral ministry with confidence that his ltimate placement will be limited to that pecialization. Therefore, the student is empted and frequently attempts to pre- are himself in far more areas of special- zation than is possible or practical within he limits of a three-year course of study. However, the effort of the seminary to lace more emphasis, instruction, and train- ng upon the necessity of the minister earning how to recruit and train people or leadership may eventually answer a art of this problem that is confronting he minister of today.

We have very briefly mentioned the reas of need for practical training. How o ministers who have completed their eminary course and are in the work of he parish evaluate their training in the ght of the experience that they have ained? Within the past decade a group f three hundred rural ministers of the Congregational-Christian, Baptist, Meth- dist, and Church of the Brethren de- ominations out of seminary for periods anging from one to fifty years, but the reater portion being out from two to wenty years, were asked several ques- ions about their training.

The first question: What tasks has your parish work required for which seminary gave you no preparation? These men listed a total of seven hundred and seventy-eight items which could be classified into about forty rough divisions. Of those totaling twenty-five or more in each division, in the order of the number of times mentioned, the following were the felt tasks for which they had not received any preparation: (1) church finances, (2) church methods for special types of parish work, *e.g.,* rural, urban, etc., (3) pastoral theology, (4) hymnology and music, (5) sociology for specialized areas, (6) religious education, (7) evangelism, (8) economics, (9) weddings, funerals, etc., (10) pastoral psychology and mental hygiene, (11) lay leadership, (12) counseling. Of the whole list only four were in the so-called "content" subjects. These were the New Testament and the Old Testament in English.

The second question: What courses were least useful? One hundred thirteen said Hebrew, seventy-nine mentioned Greek, and thirty-five listed Systematic Theology. There were numerous other subjects listed fewer times.

The third question: What courses were most helpful? More than one-half of these men listed the Old Testament and the New Testament in English. About one-third listed homiletics, and eighty-five listed religious education. About one-fourth mentioned systematic theology, pastoral theology, and church history. Forty-three listed pastoral psychology and mental hygiene; forty said Greek and thirty said sociology.

The fourth question: What new course would you add to your seminary course? There were two hundred and eighty-nine men answering this question and the largest total suggesting any one subject was forty-seven. That subject was sociology with emphasis on rural. Thirty-nine mentioned more work in church methods. Thirty-one asked for more in the English Bible. Twenty-eight mentioned evangelism and twenty-seven asked for pastoral theology. Twenty-seven desired field work

and twenty-six mentioned church finance.

It is difficult to know just how much such answers to questions evaluating a course of study might mean. The seminaries have changed considerably since some of those men were in the course of study. However, as I look at these questions and answers I am sure that our denominations and seminaries must give more attention to providing extension and in-service training for men who are now in the ministry. Such answers should also enable us to be more certain that present-day seminaries make adequate provision for the future ministry to have basic training in subjects obviously needed for effective pastoral work.

II

The problems of practical training for the Christian minister are to be found, not only in the wide range of special demands and the variety of responsibilities that have come upon the parish minister, but also in the candidates that now come into the seminary to be trained. Like the minister's job with the many changes that have come in recent years, so has there been considerable change in the type and the status of candidates in study for the Christian ministry. My observations and impressions in this regard lead me to believe that the average student coming into seminary is less mature in understanding the nature and purpose of the church and in the conviction that the church is fundamentally the way to salvation. He tends to assume that the seminary is merely an extension of the formal college training with more emphasis upon vocational training rather than the liberal arts. He may not have made an actual decision regarding the areas of the Christian ministry where he will serve and expect the seminary to lead him to that decision. His range of experience in church work is generally quite limited and he approaches the practical training in a highly theoretical and academic fashion. His background experience in local church work is generally limited only to attendance in the church school, perhaps the teaching of a Sunday-school class, and participation in a young people's society.

The candidate for the ministry frequently comes into the seminary with a real desire to serve the Lord but has no anticipation of that service taking place in the parish ministry. Now this is not primarily the fault of the seminary. In fact, the seminary actually points many such people into the local church ministry. More than a few graduates from various seminaries within the last decade admit that their interest in the local church was discovered in the process of their study at a theological institution. The candidates for the Christian ministry come with some knowledge of the great variety of vocational areas for the ministry and frequently their interest in the local church is far down on that list. This appears to be due to the fact that the religious experience of many of the candidates for the ministry has not been in relation to a local church and its program, but based on a college religious experience or a summer conference for religious work or in a personal conference that has taken place in connection with the seeking for some of the answers to the problems of a philosophy of life. Frequently that religious experience has never been tied into a normal church life. These candidates often come into the seminary with a real sense of disappointment with ministers in general. The seminary is faced with the task of building up and emphasizing the importance of the ministry and the church to the whole Christian enterprise. I would estimate that the average seminary leads far more men to a conviction as to the importance, the necessity and the opportunity of service in the parish ministry than are led into other vocational areas of the Christian ministry during their seminary days.

A real need of candidates for the Christian ministry as they come into the seminary is a stronger tie to some local church. If they have had some work experience

in that church, not necessarily of a fully professional character but as an experience that has related them to the on-going program of a parish, so much the better. We must discover and find some way whereby the candidates for the Christian ministry whose decision has been reached apart from the local church are brought into contact with that church and given some normal parish relationships prior to the seminary course.

III

The problem of practical training of men for the Christian ministry also involves taking into account the increased demands of the local church. Just as the minister's task has broadened until it involves many duties that the ministry of years ago had never contemplated, so the church of today thinks of its minister as fulfilling his responsibilities in a different way. In addition to the usual functions of preaching, worship, and pastoral care the average church has come to think of the minister as a professional leader, not necessarily committed to staying in the same community for his entire ministry, nor primarily identifying his life and destiny with the rise and fall of the community itself. The short tenure of our ministry in any given place is the primary cause of this attitude. This sense of regarding the minister as a professional leader has led to the expectancy that he will do a great many things the laity themselves once did in the operation of the church. A greater change on the part of churches in their demands of a minister has been to regard him as what might be called executive secretary. All the life and work and action of the church today centers around the minister. Personally, I am very unhappy about this development in our church life and feel that the ministry is more to be blamed than the church. Practical training of the ministry requires that we give far more attention to preparing a man to recruit and train and put to work the laity of the local church.

IV

How can the seminary attempt to meet this great need of practical training for the Christian ministry? Remember that within three years the seminary is expected to prepare a man in the whole range of the minister's job and help him to find knowledge, methods, and often a conviction regarding the work, teaching, and message of a Christian ministry. The problems of procedure and timing in relating certain courses to the training process are very difficult.

In the practical training of men for the ministry there are certain steps that are evident. These must be an integral part of the total training process:

1. It is necessary that a candidate for the ministry be helped to an understanding of why the minister does what he does. Here the student must be given an understanding of and the basic reasons for having worship and preaching. This responsibility is not limited to the "practical" men alone. In fact, the process begins with the orientation courses on "The Christian Ministry" and many of the faculty share in giving the candidate some understanding of why the minister does the things that he does. This is not limited to formal classes and lectures, but also involves group conferences, discussions, and personal interviewing. In addition, there are courses of an historical and also elementary nature leading up to the practical job of the minister.

2. The candidate is led into an understanding of how the minister does his job. Basic principles of performing certain tasks are set forth by means of the lecture, demonstration, and observation. This aspect of practical training includes both theoretical and practical methods. The student must secure a description of how the job is done. To do this the student must spend some time in observation, visits to ministers at work, observing the minister in the church where he is engaged in field work, and writing up re-

ports on some of his observations and experiences.

3. The third step in preparing men for the practical work of the ministry may be called practice. This is of three types: First, the controlled or classroom type, where the student in speech class or practice preaching or care of a parish works at some project under the immediate observation and guidance of an instructor. The second may be called observed practice in more normal situations such as the student's field work in a church or with a group of some agency. Here the supervising employer or minister as well as the school's field-work supervisor has occasions to observe him at work and to check him, report to the faculty, and advise him. In this fashion the faculty of a seminary is placed in a position where steps to help the student at weakest points can be taken. The third element of practice may be called problem sharing. Each week the student, along with others doing similar work, shares the problems of his practice work under the guidance of a faculty member or an experienced pastor. He has the employing pastor's reports of the students before him and leads that group to discovering means and methods of solving the type of problems confronting the men at the time rather than dealing with them as a theoretical problem that is to be confronted in the far distant future.

4. The ministerial student is involved in religious field work in a real life situation where his practice is not of the make-believe sort but is actually serving people in the capacity of a minister's assistant or as a minister and as such must render service even while learning. This aspect of training cannot be overemphasized, for practice in real life situations throughout the academic year and in the summer under supervision and guidance is the means whereby the student is forced to bring together all of the "content and practical" training that he has received. The whole field-work program of a seminary tends to serve as an integrating means for the student to find the maturity and the use of what he knows in situations where people must be helped and led. The bringing together in a satisfactory way of all his training to a real life situation actually serves as a basis of judging the man's readiness to go out for a life ministry. The message, the methods, and the passion to see the message proclaimed are all brought together under this form of service.

Here at Yale the process that we have just described is in operation. Probably no one is more critical of it than those who make up the faculty. In a sense seminary leaders of today are pioneering in some aspects of training for which there is no guidebook, no text, no common plan. As need arises for special training or emphasis not regularly provided, the faculty brings to the students some persons with knowledge, experience, and training for specific tasks. The faculty is composed of a group of men who are critical of themselves, of their own work, and yet in the face of a changing church and a changing ministry are seeking to give men more adequate training for the service of that church. We are confident that it can be done better. It is a responsibility of the men who recruit men for the ministry. It is a responsibility of the faculty of theological schools. It is a responsibility of the whole church. On the whole the students of today are trained much better than in former years as far as their readiness and their comprehension of the work of the parish is concerned.

Practical training of men for the Christian ministry means enabling a man when he leaves seminary to be prepared to make the influence of the Church of Christ felt in the lives of people, in the community, the state, the nation, and the world.

Congregationalism with an English Accent

An interview with C. H. Dodd of Cambridge Divinity School

David Wesley Soper

Chairman, Department of Religion, Beloit College, Beloit, Wis.

T. S. ELIOT had mentioned to me the name of C. H. Dodd, commending him as an excellent representative of a vigorous and articulate group of English Congregational theologians who, with great distinction, had reasserted central Christianity. I was interested in Dodd on my own account, because his classical Christian vitality had seemed considerably more characteristic of English than of American Congregationalism. In any case, as is true of other American denominations, there are at least two distinct Congregationalisms —one Evangelical in the noblest sense of that word, the other specifically Unitarian. New England Congregationalism gained a nominal victory over Unitarianism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but in some degree has since lost in fact what she had won in name.

Reginald Kissack, minister of Oxford's Wesley Memorial Church, Methodism's University Center, who had made it possible for me to occupy his pulpit and, with true English hospitality, had invited me on more than one occasion into his home, had similarly spoken with high praise of C. H. Dodd, regarding him of less renown but of more importance than Barth or Brunner. Another English Methodist clergyman had spoken of Dodd as "England's most significant theologian." "Though small of stature," he had said, "he is our biggest man."

I had but just returned to my hosts, the Eldreds, at Oxford, from Mrs. John Baillie's hospitality at the University of Edinburgh. Embarking upon another pilgrimage, at this point, made no great appeal. However, anticipating the stimulation of a noble mind, I set out for the Cambridge University Divinity School and Mr. Dodd.

My taxi deposited me in the rain at 3 Park Terrace; presently a charming young woman led me into a modest study. After a few moments C. H. Dodd entered, and with unassumed good cheer made me quite at home. It is probable that Mr. Dodd is not a great deal taller than the Biblical Zacchæus, but like him he has certainly climbed into a sycamore tree and seen the Lord. He is actively engaged in returning to mankind fourfold the Faith that others have stolen; more than half his intellectual treasures he has given to the poor in spirit.

It is possibly a doubtful compliment, but two men on my journey reminded me strongly, though only in cast of countenance, of our American President, Mr. Truman—His Holiness Pope Pius II and C. H. Dodd.

I

I was particularly anxious to learn what streams of influence had been flowing most noticeably into the river of English Congregationalism. Mr. Dodd asserted that the Thomist influence was practically non-existent or at most negligible, that Kierkegaardian Existentialism was not strong except as mediated through Karl Barth. Barth was remarkably well represented in the English writer Jenkins, though less popular generally than Brunner. The American Niebuhrs, at Union and at Yale, were also influential.

Was there an appreciable degree of Christian Humanism, I asked? The term apparently had a different meaning in England than in America, for Mr. Dodd understood the question as a reference to

English Unitarianism—a significant fact in itself. There was, in Dodd's opinion, little Unitarian humanism current in English religious thought. The theological disintegration of Unitarianism had simply made no significant headway in England. When I explained that by the term "Christian Humanism" I meant the essential position of T. S. Eliot, uniting "the best that had been thought and said" by men with the Self-Revelation of God in Jesus Christ, Mr. Dodd asserted that there was considerably less of this influence than there ought to be. Where the position was understood, however, great sympathy existed for it. It was clear from the discussion that English Congregationalism was simply a vital development of central Christianity with an English accent, aware of common ground with all Christian Communions, but dependent not so much upon men as upon God. The strongest foreign influence was from Brunner, with a secondary penetration from Barth.

I was impressed that English Congregationalism, like all things English, contained balance. It was vigorously and primarily centered in a Deity Who was God indeed. At the same time it was not unconscious of human freedom, purpose, and responsibility.

There was not, in Mr. Dodd's opinion, anything like the interest that ought to exist, and that he himself had perpetually sought to evoke, in the World Council of Churches, among British Congregationalists. This attitude, however, did not arise from any basic disagreement with the defining Faith of the World Council, but rather from a lack of a sense of need for ecumenical unity. Congregationalism in England believed itself a healthy Branch of the Christian Tree, was aware of its fundamental union with all Christian Communions through its commitment to Christ as God and Saviour and its share in the vitality of the Holy Spirit. There was no urgency about ecumenicity. This seemed both natural and legitimate, for surely a growing branch was something on its own account, and probably experienced little sorrow that it was distinct from other branches. Only an inferiority mentality, entirely foreign to the spirit of Christianity, would make one Communion feel useless and helpless alone. Nonetheless, in Mr. Dodd's opinion, contemporary secularism, marxism, and relativism demanded a united Christian Front, a non-Roman but truly Catholic Faith and Order; the World Council clearly offered this needed Christian Ecumenicity. There was no English interest whatever in the World Alliance for Friendship Among the Churches, which had attempted to unite religious groups around the elimination of the centrality of Christ. British Congregationalism believed firmly in the Deity and in the Humanity of Jesus Christ, and in the Life of the Holy Spirit in Church and disciple. Thus the common ground already existed for fellowship with all other central Christian denominations. The fissiparous drive of English Nonconformism had largely given way to a mood of obedience to Christ's prayer, "That they all may be one,"—in obedience also to the Apostolic commandment, "Love one another, for love is of God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love."

II

Could we carry the principle one step further, I enquired, and restore the broken union with Rome? Mr. Dodd was of the conviction that external union with Rome was not at present even a remote possibility, for the Roman emphasis upon papal absolutism had severed Roman Christians hopelessly from the total Christian Community. Reunion with Rome would have been possible if in 1870 the then reigning Pontiff had had the courage to undo the nefarious work of the Council of Trent and openly acknowledge the papal subjection to a General Council. Rome's serious problem lay in the fact that it could never acknowledge an error. The Pope could do no wrong; he was amenable to no one, having renounced the superior authority

of an Ecumenical Council. Therefore, he could never correct a mistake. A hierarchy that could do no wrong was an archaic and oriental despotism having nothing whatever in common with the New Testament which commanded that disciples freely confess their faults to one another and to God. An organization that could not change was not alive, and precisely speaking the Roman hierarchy and Rigor Mortis were one and the same thing. External reunion between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism could only come about by a papal acknowledgment of the superior authority of an Ecumenical Council.

Nonetheless a real union, of charity and of ideology, did in fact exist between representative theologians of both Libertarian and Authoritarian Christendoms. As C. S. Lewis had suggested, this meeting of minds might well lead to eventual objective reunion, though hierarchies would of course be the last either to be aware of reunion or to approve of it.

III

What, then, could be done, of a specific and practical nature, I enquired, to reintroduce central Christianity into any part of Christendom where it had been lost or mislaid? Mr. Dodd cited the great practical utility of the British Broadcasting Company in the Christian education of England. Bad as the situation undoubtedly was, with indifference or at least absenteeism strong among English people, it would have been infinitely worse had the BBC not provided, with remarkable continuity of purpose, that only central Christian voices, neither Fundamentalist nor Unitarian, had been heard. BBC speakers had represented Catholicism and all varieties of Evangelical Protestantism, yet without exception had been chosen to present central Christianity to the people. The various religious relativisms, serving as ersatz substitutes for Christianity in America, thus had not been broadcast in England.

(This wise use of radio for essential Christian Evangelism is typically English. Certain it is that anything like a comparable continuity of presentation, either as measured temporally or ideologically, simply does not exist in American broadcasting. Voices are sometimes granted continuous time, rather because of their Pied Piper charm than because they represent central Christianity.)

Preaching and prayer, with great dependence upon the Guidance and Power of the Holy Spirit, and with the liberal use of the intelligence for surmounting stubborn obstacles, clearly offered, in Mr. Dodd's opinion, the only possible avenues of effective Christian penetration into the mass American mind. There was no easy road to victory. Disintegration would increase, both extensively and intensively, on the one hand, but on the other a new integration would assuredly grow. Indeed, the new renaissance of central Christian Faith was already in progress in America —in Calhoun of Yale, in the two Niebuhrs, in Lewis and Hough of Drew, in many Princeton leaders, even at the University of Chicago and at Harvard. The Great Light had not only not completely failed in America; as a matter of fact, it had been coming to new brilliance. Central Christianity, chastened and humbled after its nineteenth-century ordeal by rationalism and its twentieth-century ordeal by relativism, had found itself on firm ground and in possession of increased powers.

IV

In the political world Mr. Dodd believed that Christianity did not, after all, offer blueprints of specific measures, either economic or governmental. Christianity was rather the Critic, surveying the scene and demanding that individual liberty, as well as the claims of the community, be provided for—demanding also that statesmen abide by their promises, eschew political lying and deceit, and seek solutions rather than doctrinaire panaceas. Christianity would allow no political trespassing

upon the sanctity of the individual soul. Any attempt on the part of social engineers to put a straitjacket on the human spirit would have to be resisted to the death. Social planning was, of course, a necessity, particularly in a time of shortages, but it was never intended to be more than a servant, enabling human strength to assert itself and human wisdom to apply itself to the solution of human problems. There was no substitute for human responsibility; social planning was at best merely a community expression of personal responsibility. England would have to find moral ways to solve her economic problem; and minorities would continually have to be defended from majorities. British Socialism was doing a fair job in the distribution of existing resources, through rations and queues, but was making a bad mess of Production, substituting fewer hours and higher wages for "more work."

Christianity, asserted Mr. Dodd, ever demanded moral solutions to practical problems, with the Divine Charity which was responsibility expressed in deeds.

Unearned Increments of the Ministry

The Rev. Howard J. Chidley
Winchester, Mass.

TOMORROW I shall be seventy years of age. I have been preaching fifty years, having begun occasional pulpit-supply work when I was twenty. It is a long perspective from which to evaluate our profession as ministers.

Let me say that if I were beginning life over again I should unhesitatingly choose the ministry. I could have gone into college teaching in the philosophical department on my graduation from Dartmouth College. It was a strong temptation, but I wanted to deal with life in the raw and at first hand, and therefore entered the ministry. There have been times, when the going was difficult and "the chariot wheels of the Lord drave heavily," I have cast a regretful look back to the campus, but not for long.

In our parish we have a funeral on the average of every fourteen days. A minister has a great opportunity then to stand as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land" to those in bereavement, and they never forget that help, nor cease to be grateful, and that gratitude bears fruit in love as the years go by. This is another precious increment of our profession.

There are other gracious associations which come only with a long pastorate. I heartily believe in long pastorates if they continue to be vital. There is time for confidences with the families and individuals of the parish to ripen, insight into their problems, deep roots of loyalty and trust, a feeling of stability on both sides, which no short pastorate can give, and a knowledge on the minister's part of the backgrounds of family history which makes it easier for him to be a wise counsellor and a trusted friend. If half the help a family doctor gives his patients comes from their confidence in him, this is ten times true of our profession.

Nor am I forgetting the privilege a minister has in ministering to the poor, the shut-ins and the disinherited. Food and clothing, medicine and fuel are obvious essentials in some cases, but a minister with imagination will find other ways to bring courage, comfort and confidence to some of these people. Our church gave plants to more than fifty sick and lonely

people this Christmas season—food for their spirits, as necessary and welcome as groceries for the poor. They know they are not forgotten. The satisfaction a minister gets out of such service makes his own Christmas sweeter and more radiant.

And then there is the rare privilege of ministering to little children and youth, perhaps the most rewarding of all! Much unjust criticism has been heaped upon the heads of the youth of our generation. People forget that they are as bewildered as their elders in this postwar confusion. It is not always youth who are delinquent, but their parents. These young people need sympathy and understanding. Once they feel sure of that, one can lead them almost anywhere. Frankly, I can see no difference between the youth of today, all things considered, and those of the past generation. They are as yeasty, volatile, noisy and lovable as ever. They have the energy of a locomotive combined with the resistance of a mule. But they are not so cocksure of themselves as they appear, and at times long for advice if they can be sure of being understood. They hate cant, as they always have. I have conducted question-boxes with them for twenty-five years, and I know how hungry they are to get at reality in religion and ethics and life. I have seen several generations of high school students go off to college, and I know that our having put the cards on the table with them during their adolescent years has saved them to the church in their post-college days. There is no more rewarding effort a minister can expend than right here. It is a high privilege, to boot.

I touch lightly on the unearned increment of the long vacations accorded many of us, the luxury of being our own bosses, the compulsion to exercise our minds; and therefore to be constant readers. Then there is the delight of creation in the preparation of our sermons. Books are our tools of trade, and words are the tentacles by which we touch those who listen to our sermons. There is upon us always the duty of precision in the use of words and the achievement of some element of literary beauty if we can manage it. And how grateful the congregation is when a sermon strikes fire in them, and sends them away uplifted and strengthened! God knows they need a sense of security in a troubled age, a firm footing amid the swirling waters that suck at their feet.

But it is a tremendous responsibility also. If, as has been said, preaching is the conveyance of divine truth through the personality of the preacher, we come back to the staggering realization that the only source of originality in preaching is that of a growing soul in the preacher. This means the constant cultivation of his own spiritual life. This is what it means to be "men of God." We are dealing in eternal verities: that is our only reason for being in the pulpit. If we fail there we fail everywhere, and "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

The soul is a delicate entity. It knows its own integrity, or lack of it, and something goes dead within us and in our words if we fail at this point. It need not be. If we have a passion to speak the truth, that passion will create truth in the inward parts. And when one feels that he has succeeded here, he is overwhelmed with awe at the influence he is privileged to wield, and filled with humility and gratitude that God has seen fit to use him as an instrument for His eternal purpose.

These constitute some of the more obvious unearned increments that go with our profession.

Use of Candles in the Sanctuary

The Rev. Egbert W. A. Jenkinson
First Church, Congregational, Methuen, Massachusetts

IN the interest of worship the time has come to think more intelligently about the use of candles in our churches. Ever since I can remember, I have been fascinated by the glow of candle light as a symbol of religion. I was brought up in a Unitarian Chapel in London, but I played Church with brass stair rods and candles for an Altar. Yet, it is only within the past few years that I introduced candles in our service of worship in our beautiful church in Methuen.

So long as the communion table stood on the lower level and in front of the Bible I did not want to use candles. I have been in many churches in New England where both the cross and candles are used on the communion table in front and below a central pulpit. I do not consider that this use of the cross and candles creates any increased sense of worship. It is offensive to good taste, and a very bad makeshift for an Altar.

Our church has a beautiful dolomite arched apse, and a marble reredos, but it lacks the depth of a chancel. We do have a lectern and a side pulpit, so that the center of the apse is clear and free for the communion table to be elevated. The candles and the cross do not appear out of place on the table in its present position. For some time I could not appreciate the curt remarks of one layman who complained that ten-cent candles were an offense in front of beautiful marble and below a glorious window. (The window of The Resurrection by John La Farge.) What I found out was that during the sermon the light of the candles actually bothered his eyes. He could not look up without the candlelight distressing him. Here was a layman who was not a back-pew sitter, and now he was being penalized for sitting up front by being unable to look at either the minister or the window during the sermon.

If this is the effect of candles to front-pew sitters in a church which at least has an apse, how much more offensive must candles be to those who sit up front in a church which uses candles on the communion table *in front of the minister.*

Churches with deep chancels do not have this problem. I have been in cathedrals and churches in Europe and Canada, and in our country, where the pulpit is so far removed from the glow or flicker of the candles that no one is disturbed, but I am convinced that *no church without a chancel* increases the sense of worship if the glow of the candle hits a worshipper in the eye—no symbolism in the world about the Light of Christ to the contrary.

I tried not lighting the candles for a few Sundays, but there were some people —mostly back-pew sitters who missed the light as much as the front-pew sitters were offended by the light hitting their eyes. Then one Sunday, while the deacons were passing the plates, I took the extinguisher and snuffed out the candles and put out all lights but the light on the pulpit. Now I do it every Sunday because the reaction was exceedingly favorable from all people. There may be no ecclesiastical precedent for such procedure, but I am convinced that we should give up using candles altogether in churches without a chancel, or that during the sermon the candles should be extinguished.

A Pilgrim Peacemaker

The Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, S.T.B., D.D.

Cambridge, Mass.

MANY of us who are ourselves of New England descent are undiscriminating in our use of the names Pilgrim and Puritan. We may remember that the Pilgrims settled at Plymouth in 1620, and that it was not until eight years later that the first Puritans came to Salem. But we are apt to take it for granted that the two colonies were founded by men of similar methods and ideals, and that the Puritans were in sympathy with their forerunners. And yet there was a marked difference between them; more than that, there was suspicion and dislike. Plymouth and the Bay Colony were wholly separate ventures, with different support in England, with differing ideals for their life in this New England. The settlers at Plymouth little relished the advent of the Puritans, while the men of Salem regarded the Pilgrims with disapproval and scorn. So perfectly have they blended that we forget that it was more than sixty years before they were united in the royal Province of Massachusetts. Even the memory of their differences has almost perished. But it is worth while to consider them for a moment, that we may recall an incident which had much to do with bringing them together happily.

The Pilgrims were Separatists from the Church of England. They desired to see the principles of the Reformation carried much further than they had been in England under Elizabeth and James I. They believed that the Church and State were separate realms, that the civil ruler had no authority over spiritual affairs. They held "that every true visible church is a company of people called and separated from the world by the Word of God, and joyned together by voluntarie profession of the Faith of Christ," and further "that every church hath power . . . to chuse and take unto themselves meet and sufficient persons in the offices and Functions of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons . . . and that no Anti-Christian Hierarchie . . . of Popes, Archbishops, Lord-Bishops . . . nor any such like [should] be set over the Spouse and Church of Christ." Seeing that it was impossible to hope for such reforms as these within the Church of England, they separated themselves from it. For this they fell under the ban of the law, and after persecutions which it seems almost incredible should follow such small differences of opinion, made their way to Leyden, and thence across the ocean to Plymouth. A very little indeed would have changed their destination, and the course of American history. Their good behavior during their exile in Leyden had so commended them to the Dutch Government that before they left Holland tempting offers were held out to induce them to settle at New Amsterdam on the island of Manhattan. Again when the *Mayflower* sighted the outer shore of Cape Cod, she tacked and stood to the southward, intending to make a landing at some place near the Hudson. A few hours, however, brought her among dangerous shoals, and her captain put about for Cape Cod Harbor. In 1627, several friendly letters passed between the authorities of New Amsterdam and those of Plymouth. Had the settlement at Salem brought about a renewal of persecution, or even a bitter spirit of enmity, it would have been by no means impossible for the Pilgrims to have entered into close alliance with New Amsterdam, or even to have removed in a body to the protection of the Dutch Government.

The Puritans came also from the eastern countries of England and left their homes because they disapproved of the church policy of Laud. But here ends their resemblance to the Pilgrims. They came under a different charter, in greater numbers, and with far richer and more powerful support. Furthermore, they came as members of the Church of England. They were opposed to many of its practices, indeed, but they believed that it should be reformed from within. Its policy had been changed four times in the previous century, the Puritan party was growing, and the time yet come for another and a favorable movement. In the meantime they failed to conform to many of its usages, and for that reason were liable to punishment. But non-conformity was not Separatism, and the latter they abhorred. Finding themselves uncomfortable in England, they emigrated that they might be at liberty to worship in accordance with what they believed to be the true service of the Church of England. Their attitude is well expressed in that famous saying of Higginson, one of the first ministers of Salem. Standing upon the stern of the ship *Talbot* with his congregation, as they looked back for the last time at the fading shores of England he exclaimed, "We will not say as the Separatists were wont to say at their leaving of England, 'Farewell Babylon! Farewell Rome!' But we will say, 'Farewell dear England! Farewell, the Church of God in England, and all Christian friends there!' We do not go to New England as Separatists from the Church of England." This was the Puritan ideal to set up a commonwealth with a reformed Church of England, making church membership a necessary qualification for full citizenship.

Thus the settlers at Salem carried with them from their homes their repugnance to Separatism and their suspicion of Plymouth. And yet we find that almost immediately they adopted the methods of church organization which prevailed at Plymouth. Friendship also speedily sprang up, so that these two colonies, which might have been at swords' points, finally blended under civil rule, and developed New England Congregationalism. It is now impossible, perhaps, to untangle all the causes which brought this about, but at the beginning we find an incident and a person whose influence cannot be easily calculated.

Samuel Fuller, a cloth-maker of London, was ordained deacon in the church at Leyden as early as 1611. He studied medicine, very likely at the university there. In the troublesome negotiations with the English adventurers, capitalists we should call them, who lent the Pilgrims money for their enterprise, he played a conciliatory part. He came over in the *Mayflower* and was of great service as physician and surgeon of the little colony. Sometimes an English vessel fishing off the coast or voyaging to Virginia would bring in her sick for his attention. Now and then a wounded Indian slipped through the woods from Narragansett to be healed. He was a tender-hearted, devout man, evidently much loved. Now it happened that in the winter of 1629 the newly landed colonists at Salem were severely stricken with scurvy and other sickness brought on by the unwholesome salt meat which was their principal diet. In his distress their Governor, John Endecott, wrote to William Bradford at Plymouth for aid, and Samuel Fuller was sent to tend the sick. His ministering care and wisdom benefited more than the bodies of the afflicted Puritans, for he seems effectually to have cured them of their prejudice regarding Plymouth. In May, Endecott wrote again to Bradford a letter which, as Bradford says, "shows ye beginning of their acquaintance." But it shows also a marked change in the attitude of the Puritans. Their sufferings had called forth the charity of the broadminded Pilgrim, whose own experiences of the first winters at Plymouth had made him a wise and trustworthy counsellor. Many a night, after the last patient had been bled, must the Pilgrim doctor have talked with John Endecott before the fire while the north-

east wind drifted the snow about the log cabins at Salem. And the stern, stiff Puritans melted a little before the glow of his loving service. By day this good Samaritan has bound up the strangers' wounds, and at night he finds that their differences have vanished with the misconception and prejudice of which they were born. The winter's acquaintance has brought new light to Endecott and he writes thus in this May letter:

Rightworthy Sr.

It is a thing not unusuall that servants to one Mr. and of the same household should be strangers; I assure you, I desire it not, nay, to speak more plainly, I cannot be so to you. Gods people are all marked with one and ye same marke, and sealed with one and ye same seale, and have for ye maine one and ye same harte, guided by one and same spirite of truth; and wher this is, ther can be no discorde, nay, here must be sweete harmonie. . . . I acknowledge my selfe much bound to you for your kind love and care in sending Mr. Fuller among us, and rejoyce much yt I am by him satisfied touching your judgments of ye outward forme of Gods worshipe. It is, as far as I can yet gather, no other than is warranted by ye evidence of truth, and ye same which I have professed and maintained ever since ye Lord in mercie revealed him selfe unto me; being far from ye commone report that hath been spread of you touching that particuler. . . . I shall not neede at this time to be tedious unto you, for God willing, I propose to see your face shortly. In ye mean time, I humbly take my leave of you, comiting you to ye Lords blessed protection, and rest,

Your assured loving friend,

Jo. Endecott.

Thus, in a few short weeks, the kindly service of the Plymouth doctor dissipated prejudice and scorn, and laid a firm basis of Christian charity upon which the two colonies could happily unite.

The seed which Fuller sowed took root immediately, and we find that in August of the same year Higginson and two others just arrived from England were ordained over the Salem Church, although they had previously received Episcopal ordination in London. Furthermore, delegates from Plymouth arrived in time to give the right hand of fellowship. Already the Salem Church had adopted what were practically Separatist principles. As the Puritans founded new settlements at Boston and Charlestown and Watertown, they organized their churches on the Salem model, and from 1629 on the subtle but strong influence of little Plymouth largely moulded the Puritan Church.

It would be too much to say that other causes did not also contribute to this development. But behind our New England Congregationalism lies the consecrated service and the liberal zeal of the Pilgrim doctor. The long years might indeed have modified the Puritan church and eventually perhaps would have brought about a like result. But he hastened and simplified and sweetened the blending of the two colonies. Their divergent views of church polity sank into insignificance before his simple kindliness, and a union which synods and church councils would have slowly and painfully accomplished was almost unconsciously realized through his acts of loving charity. The reconciliation of the Pilgrims and the Puritans was the work not of theologians and statesmen, but of the Plymouth doctor and deacon.

Service of Thanksgiving and Communion for Mothers

The Rev. Malcolm MacDuffie
Ellsworth, Maine

THE BIDDING

Beloved in the Lord who have, during the past year, known the great blessing of motherhood, draw near to the holy table. And let us give thanks together for God's mercy unto us.

Let Us Pray: O heavenly Father, Creator of life and giver of every good and perfect gift: accept now the full hearts of gratitude we bring to thee. Feed us with thy Holy Spirit according to our needs, that we may be always wise, patient and loving. Not for ourselves we ask it, but for the sake of those precious lives thou hast entrusted unto us. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

THE MAGNIFICAT

In glad, yet solemn, consciousness that in bringing life into the world we have shared with the fathers and mothers of all time the wonder and glory of God, let us read together a portion of Holy Scripture:

And the angel came to Mary and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus."

And Mary said to the angel, "How can this be?" And the angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God."

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. For, behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is on those who fear him from generation to generation."

EXHORTATION

Dearly beloved, we have received it that Jesus, on the night before he died, as he supped with his disciples in an upper chamber, took bread and broke it, likening it unto his crucified body, and poured out wine as a visible parable of the shedding of his blood. As he gave his life that we might live more fully and abundantly, let us think how our lives may be lived in pure example and holy teaching and selfless devotion, to the glory of God and the health and beauty of our children and the salvation of the world.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Almighty Father who, through love, hast called us to the sacred trust of motherhood, hear us and forgive us our faults: For all we have done that has brought sorrow to thee we ask thy pardon—for our heedlessness toward thy calling, for moments of distrust and fear and causeless anxiety.

Do thou forgive us our forgotten vows, the good resolutions we have not kept, the excuses that have satisfied us too easily, the secret faults we have known and permitted to rule in our hearts.

Of thy mercy, forgive and cleanse us from the words of unjust anger and bitterness that have escaped us, from our readiness to blame and our want of

thoughtfulness, patience and kindness toward all men.

For forgetting to thank thee for thy goodness to us, for lacking appreciation of this fair world, the great opportunities open to us and our children, the love of human hearts, we would be forgiven.

Forgive us if we have failed to counsel worthily those who love us and depend upon us. And grant that we may be so sensitive to thy loving presence in days to come, that our homes may be filled with light, and the children entrusted to us may learn to walk with us in the light, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SETTING APART OF THE ELEMENTS

The minister removes the napkin from the bread and says:

"Let the bread here set apart from the bounty of the earth be to us a token of all we receive and cannot ourselves effect. And let us, with quiet hearts, wait for that highest good of all—the presence and spirit of God."

The minister uncovers the cups and says:

"Let the wine here outpoured be to us a token of all the self-forgetting good which men must needs do for others if they are to share the fullness of the divine blessing. And let us offer ourselves not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

SILENT PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my will and make it thine;
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart; it is thine own;
It shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for thee. Amen.

COMMUNION PRAYER

Almighty God, whose goodness loved us into life and whose mercies never fail: we commend to thee all who have a place in our hearts and sympathies; all who are joined to us by the sacred ties of kindred, friendship and love; all little children who are dear to us; all who help us to a faithful life and whose spirit turns our duties into love. Keep them both outwardly in their bodies and inwardly in their souls, and pour upon them the continual dew of thy blessing, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMUNION

UNISON PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

Thanks be to thee, O Lord God, Father Almighty, for the way of grace and truth which thou hast made known to us in the life and death of our elder brother, Jesus of Nazareth. And we thank thee that we have been chosen links in the chain of life that he made holy. We thank thee for the fulfillment of our natures and the deep joys of motherhood. We praise thee for the dear children thou hast given us, and that we are able to love them and care for them while they need us most.

Teach us how to give ourselves so wisely and steadfastly for them that we may inherit the promise of Jesus to all who, losing their lives for his sake, shall find them. Thou hast unspeakably blessed us. May we remember, while we have breath, to bless thee and magnify thy holy name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Maturing in the Ministry

The Rev. Robert G. Armstrong

Lebanon, Conn.

WHEN I was first asked to write on this subject I confess it came as something of a shock. Was I really growing old? Did I need to carry a cane? Just because I had to simonize my top, was that a sign that the years had finally got me? Thinking it over, I came to the same conclusion Abe Lincoln did when he was asked to sign his name to a subscription paper for the benefit of an opposing lawyer, who had lost the seat of his pants. He wrote: "I refuse to subscribe to the end in view."

However, thirty-five years in the ministry, fourteen of them in a capacity that gave me rather close insight into the work of the average minister and the average church, that helped me to see the reasons for success or failure, does give me something to say.

All ministers recall easily the early days of their ministry, those days when we were filled with an idealism, had a radiancy of faith, believed that we were destined to set the world aright, to say nothing of the individual church. Our idealism suffered a rude shock. The radiancy of our faith may have been dimmed. Our fine ideas were not accepted at once and put into practice for the remolding of Podunk Corner into a bit of the kingdom of God. We soon learned that the world was not waiting for the sunrise, that it preferred all too often the moonshine. The old deacons refused to deak, the trustees were as immovable as the rock of Gibraltar. We began to understand that enthusiasm was not enough. It must be coupled with a deep, abiding faith, with an understanding of the deep-seated prejudices, the mores, the self-satisfactions of the average congregation. There had to be the slow, tactful process of planting the seed, hoping that within three to five years some of the seed would sprout up in some layman's mind and he'd believe that he had a fine new idea all his own and go to town to make it real. Then things might begin to happen.

Then too, in those early days, how proud we were of our learning! We read books, a very proper and profitable thing to do, but we quoted too much from those books. Instead of bringing the beaten gold into the pulpit we brought our tools there and the noise of the pounding left no time for the real truth to sink in. We liked long, polysyllabic words. We had grown accustomed to the technical words of the classroom and we forgot that those words, so fastened in our vocabulary, had little or no meaning to the average layman, no more than the jargon of the physician when he tells you in his technical terms what ails you. You want to know whether you've got a plain, old-fashioned belly-ache. Acidosis, or some other word, doesn't throw much light on the situation.

We needed to go back to Fenelon's Dialogues on Eloquence and reread his comment when one of his interlocutors had said: "Since I parted with you, Sir, I heard a sermon at ——, and I thought of you. The preacher spoke in a very edifying manner: but I question whether the common people understood him or not." To which Fenelon answered: "It happens but too often (as I heard an ingenious lady observe), that our preachers speak Latin in English. The most essential quality of a good preacher is to be instructive: but he must have great abilities and experience to make him so. On the one hand he must be perfectly acquainted with the force of scripture ex-

pressions: on the other he must understand the capacity of those to whom he preaches; and adapt himself to it. . . . One might follow some preachers twenty years, without getting sufficient knowledge of religion."

The time came, of course, with God's help, when we came to understand that simplicity of language is no indication of simplicity of thought, but an indication of the finest art of teaching, the presentation of knowledge in terms understandable to the student. The over-elaborate language of the classroom went by the board.

And too, in those early years, we all felt a bit set up by our position of supposed leadership. Were we not the Parson — the Person — of the community? Were we not looked up to, respected? We were educated men with a B.A. and a B.D. after our names. And sometimes that sense of leadership went to our heads. We forgot that leadership is not dictatorship, that there is a vast difference between being a spiritual leader in a democratic organization and being a clerical dictator in an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Some of that wind was early knocked out of us by sometimes harsh treatment at the hands of the *hoi polloi.*

We got to speaking of MY church, MY board of trustees, MY church school. The possessive got possession of us and inflated us too much. No minister owns his church or any part of it. We learned, some of us anyway, to speak of OUR church, OUR boards, OUR church schools, recognizing the partnership that must exist between pastor and people if a successful work is to be done. Some never get over the possessive. And they are the ones who usually are headed for difficulty sooner or later.

As we grew older we came to realize that soundness rather than sound wins. Those days of youthful enthusiasm when we bellowed forth our message! Those days when we strove mightily to get a catchy sermon theme that would look well in the press! Those days when we ran three-ringed circuses! But what came of it all! God was not in the fury. God was not in the circus. God was not in the flashy sermon title. God was in the quiet, steady, persuasive work of the parish minister who went about his parish loving folks, seeking his sermon themes in the needs of his parish. As our friend Fenelon said two centuries ago: "Nothing appears more shocking and absurd, than to see a man very warm and active, when he is saying the driest, coldest things. Though he sweats himself, he chills the blood of his audience." He also says of those who seek to be dispensers of sacred rhetoric rather than preachers of the simple gospel: "Their only care is to fill their discourse with abundance of ornaments, to please the vitiated taste of their audience; like ignorant cooks, who know not how to season dishes in a proper, natural way; but fancy they must give them an exquisite relish by mixing excessive quantities of the most seasoning things. But the style of the true orator has nothing in it that is swelling or ostentatious; he always adapts it to the subjects he treats of, and the persons he instructs; and manages it so judiciously that he never aims at being sublime and lofty, but when he ought to be so." The old bishop had lots to say that is as wise, as useful today, as it was two hundred years ago.

Then too, as we grew older, we realized that the ministry is no place for the stuffed shirt. One young man came up for ordination who proudly announced in his ordination paper that he wanted to go to the best college for his education, so he went to Harvard. (Some of us Amherst men bridled at that. We knew Amherst was better.) Then he announced he wanted to go to the best seminary in the country for his theological work, so he went to Union. (Well, some of us felt we had something even if we didn't go to Union.) He sang his own praises so much that there was even some question of ordaining him. He was a stuffed shirt thinking he was ready for the pulpit

of the Old South Church in Boston, when he wasn't really ready for the little but significant church to which he was called to serve, and where he never succeeded because he was a stuffed shirt.

Somehow the whole incident reminds me of once when Carter Glass was speaking in the Senate. He wasn't much given to strong speech but this time he was stirred up and was going strong. One of his colleagues shouted out, "Give 'em hell, Carter." He replied, "Hell? Why use dynamite when insect powder will do." The stuffed-shirt variety never gets down to the common level where he understands folks, and a man who cannot understand folks ought never to enter the ministry. Brethren, beware when you get to thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to think!

Then as we grew more mature in the ministry we grew also more human. We accepted our place as a spiritual leader but were willing to walk on the same level as our fellow man. We became able to laugh at ourselves, to see our follies, take a joke as well as give one. God pity the man who can't. He is fit for stratagems and spoils and hell itself. Some ministers have taken seriously the advice of Thomas Corwin, a Congressman, to a young man: "Never make people laugh. If you would succeed in life, you must be solemn, solemn as an ass. All great monuments are built over solemn asses." The man who can never make a person laugh deserves a great monument over him and the sooner he is put under it the better for the world. Now, of course, there are those who go out of their way to create a laugh. It isn't something spontaneous; it is forced. We know that a bit of laughter that comes naturally, spontaneously, is a good tonic whether in the pulpit or out of it.

And as we grew older we recognized some of the dangers of maturity. We saw so many around us who had failed to grow mentally. Their minds had atrophied. They relied on the same old themes over and over. They wondered why churches did not want them. They wondered why others could not recommend them whole-heartedly. They may have fallen into the evil habit of riding hobbies in the pulpit. One man I knew (he's gone to his reward) preached a series of seven sermons on Circumcision. That well-nigh cut off his congregation. I do give him credit for something or other, I don't know just what. Another man preached a series of eight consecutive sermons on Prohibition, which was enough to drive his congregation to drink. It did thrust him out of his church. These were both good men, pious men, sincere in their way. But they failed to realize that there must be a balanced diet in preaching as well as in eating. Such men remind me of the retort of a Bostonian to the superciliousness of Oscar Wilde in a lecture before a Boston audience. Wilde said: "You're Philistines who have invaded the sacred sanctum of art." The man retorted: "And you're driving us forth with the jawbone of an ass."

As we have matured somewhat and have looked about us we have come to realize the difficulty of doing anything for the man who is continually finding fault with the church which he serves while never being willing to examine himself to see if he might not be lacking in some of the spiritual graces. I imagine that a number of us would be rather chagrined to find how acceptably and worthily our places had been filled when we left a position where we thought we were well-nigh indispensable. Wouldn't it be wise for each of us to sit down sometime and enumerate some of the things we might list if we were to ask ourselves: "What would I do if I were my successor in this church?" Often the church is ripe but the minister has rotted. He has soured on the job and can't see the opportunity right at his very door. Again and again I have had men come into my office and assure me that when they left the church it would go to pieces, only to have a new man come in to bring the church to life.

As we matured in the ministry we saw en of promise in their youth fall heir the temptations of middle age. They came physically, mentally, spiritually zy. They depended too much upon the ord for their inspiration in the pulpit d spent little or no time in the hard ork that produces the beaten gold for e pulpit. They might read some of the luminous, if not luminous, volumes of ne popular preacher of the day from ich they got some platitudinous things mouth on the coming Sunday. Fenelon ters to Cicero about such: "Cicero takes tice of this kind of people; who live ways, as it were, from hand to mouth, thout laying up any stock of provision." ow sad it is to see men in the ministry ad thirty years before their time! The an who hasn't a vital, compelling mes- ge for a day like this ought to quit the inistry and work in the tobacco fields. t least he'd help men to whom a good gar gives solace.

And, of course, we have seen the other ide of the picture, the man who was a tudent and not a lover of men. He, too, etered out in his ministry because he vouldn't stoop to pulling doorbells or ushing them. He failed to be a shepherd f his flock. He wanted to be a recluse ix days in the week and then expected hat his gifted oracle would meet the de- nands of the people when he condescended o share his mental aberrations with them n Sunday morning.

The first question asked me by hun- reds of pulpit committees was, "Is he a astor?" The second was, "Can he reach?" I like the old phraseology of he installation service. We vote to in- tall a man as "Pastor and Teacher" of a hurch. Note the order! The wise teacher s one who knows those whom he seeks o teach. The successful minister, in the eal meaning of the word, is not a dis- enser of rhetoric. He is a proclaimer of God's truth as he sees his people need that ruth. He cannot know their needs unless e is a pastor first.

Maturity in the ministry has brought us to realize also that a man is not to be judged by the degrees he has after his name or the size of the church he may be in. Honestly, brethren, with all due regard for learning, I have seen more darn fools in the ministry with a Ph.D. or with a Phi Beta Kappa key prominently displayed than I like to recall. Somehow the pursuit of a Ph.D. saps the humanity out of a man and makes him a walking encyclopedia rather than a human being. I certainly do not despise learning, far from it, but there must be the warm stream of human interest blended with that learning. A degree after a man's name is no insurance that he is God's elect for bringing in the kingdom of God. It has been said that M.D. stands for moderately dumb, D.D. for doubly dumb, and Ph.D. for phenomenally dumb. I had more failures with men with Ph.D.'s than with any other type. It's a curious fact! Much learning tends to make some men mad.

On the other hand, we all know men committed to the tasks of the village or rural church who are worthy of some of the larger churches of our denominations. They love folks, they preach well, they have sympathy, patience, adaptability. They handle situations that some of our city men would not be capable of handling. They do not care who gets the credit so long as the job is done. My hat is off to scores of such men whom I know, whom I have recommended to much larger churches, and who have said: "My work here is not done; I'm staying by." Within one week two men, who had been lured to city churches in Metropolitan New York, wrote asking me for a village or a rural church. They had learned a lesson. Not that they had failed in the larger churches. They had succeeded. But the satisfactions were not to be found there that they had found in the smaller field.

Maturity strips aside much of the glamor of the cathedral church, the cushioned pew, the operatic choir. Maturity reveals the solid worth of the quiet, unostentatious work in the average

church. Some day our denominational officials will wake up to the fact that some of the best men are to be found in the obscure places, so intent upon their work that they are not clamoring for seats among the so-called mighty.

What makes a good minister? As the years go by we realize that a good minister is marked by his sincerity, his love of folks, his sense of humor, his respect for the personality of others, his sense of a real mission in the name of his Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. He may be found in a city church or he may be found in a quiet rural parish. The qualities that mark him as a good minister of the Lord Jesus do not designate him as a rural minister or a city minister. God forbid that we ever divide the ministry into classifications. As good old Dr. Emrich used to say to me: "Robbie, wherever the word of God is proclaimed, that is holy ground."

For me the years are passing. Thirty-five years in the ministry is no small span. But were I to live my life over again and had my present knowledge of the trials, the hardships, the disappointments of the ministry, I would again elect to serve the Church of Jesus Christ as a minister of His gospel, but I would hope with better success and with fewer mistakes and with greater zeal.

Life Is Like a Garden

The Lord took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden.
Genesis 2:15

LOVING FATHER, Thou didst purposely design the world we live in to be a garden. A garden where humanity's first parents were robed in innocence; where the beauty of companionship was the fruit of trust; where life was love and labor was sweet; where peace and plenty were each day's common blessings; where contented hearts were the benediction of each eventide.

But this garden has been turned into a dreary desert. We have seen its innocence stripped of its virtues; we have seen the blush of shame leave its indelible scar; we have seen the serpent of sin cross the garden's threshold; we have seen doubt and blight grafted to the tree of life and knowledge; we have seen the tragic consequences of a foolish and fatal choice; we have seen mankind stray in uncertain paths, with bowed heads and heavy hearts.

Today we mourn our lost heritage. We have found that living without Thee means paying too great a price. Sad experience has taught us that material prosperity without spiritual progress is dangerous living. The testimony of time bears witness to our folly of mistaking activity for achievement. The verdict of the wise is that when we break with the past, we seal our own doom.

Lead us back to our lost estate; direct us to our garden-home to live truly as Thy children. Teach us to see and say again "It is good." Walk and talk with us in the cool of the day.

CARADOC MORGAN

Concerning Style and Other Matters

The Editor

MR. C. S. LEWIS, Fellow of Magdalen College, has recently published a book on *Miracles*. He possibly best known by the *Screwtape Letters*, but he has to his credit a long and arresting list of titles and the originality and brilliancy of his mind have won him a growing recognition. We have not had of late much discussion of miracles. Theological and critical interests have apparently moved into other regions. Miracles have been and still are, of course, involved in any examination of the historicity of the New Testament records, but they do not seem to be made the test of that historicity as they once were. The theological uses of the word "myth" with which we have become familiar make a kind of indefinite attitude toward miracles possible. Their values apparently do not depend upon their historic reality.

It was quite different, a long, very long generation ago, (how far off and how long ago Robert Elsmere seems now) and we who were then young wrestled with the question of miracles, "do they or do they not happen"? The Editor doubts whether young ministers now are thus perplexed or would easily understand how acute the perplexity once was. Nor have some of us ever quite resolved it.

Lewis does not offer his book as an examination of the evidences for Christian miracles. He is, he says in substance, trying to clear the ground for such a study. He says, reasonably enough, that if one does not believe that miracles can possibly occur, it is useless to inquire whether they have occurred. (This, one may doubt—there must, under any circumstances, be some explanation of the narratives.) First of all then, he argues, we must examine the grounds for believing in the possibility of miracles. This, Lewis proceeds to do in a series of brilliant chapters which cover an unexpected range of subjects. There is nothing, he holds, in the order of the universe as we know it to forbid the possibility of miracles. On the other hand, given the power of God and our human need, miracles are not only possible: they are inevitable.

How far his arguments are likely to change the minds of those who follow them, they must themselves decide. They are not on the whole original; considering how long and how searchingly the whole question of New Testament miracles have been examined, every possible approach would seem long ago to have been covered. The arresting thing is Lewis' style, which the Editor's style is not competent to characterize, and to an unusual degree Lewis' book is his style in action. Its real force is not in what he says but how he says it—whether or no in this case the style is the man; certainly the style is the book.

* * *

Which is as good a point of departure as any for some written remarks about "style" in preaching. Webster's Dictionary has eleven possible meanings of the word, with subheads, which in itself is a testimony to its importance. It meant to begin with the instrument (*stilus*) used by the ancients in writing on waxed tablets. This useful tool to which we may owe Cicero's orations and St. Paul's letters, being quite like a little pillar changed its Latin "i" to Greek "y" and became *stylus* (a column). Then by a process for which the rhetoricians have a name, what they wrote with began to mean some distinctive quality of what they wrote (as we say that a writer wields a "brilliant pen") and a new and spacious word was at the service of those who needed it.

It could not be confined to the charac-

terization of waxed tablets. Art and architecture, music and fashion plates made it their own. It is, therefore, in general, the quality or qualities which give character to our human creations, and when it is nobly right it gives excellence to all our noblest human creations—including sermons. Historians of preaching note and characterize the homiletic styles of periods and preachers, especially outstanding preachers. The style, they say, is the man, the whole of him, in creative and self-revealing action and its individual variations are beyond tracing—style moves along a wide front. Seventeenth-century "witty" preaching and eighteenth-century sober and argumentative preaching, are as far apart as Donne and Tillotson and in general the preaching of the last century had stylistic qualities which have more or less passed out of the picture of contemporaneous preaching. It is hard to say why. Who can trace the course of the Time-Spirit?

There are basal metabolisms which seem to control the balances of the body. There must be basal mental and spiritual metabolisms which control the multitudinous ways of our minds and spirits, or else why should Rembrandt paint in lights and shadows and Corot in luminous mists? Beecher's periods have in theme the surge of a mounting sea and Lincoln began the unforgettable by saying, "Four score and seven years ago." For the artist, style is composition, balance, color and brush work —Turner's way of painting the *Slave Ship* and Franz Hals' way of painting *The Laughing Cavalier*. They mixed their colors with the pigment of their souls. Style is therefore basally a "natural." It may be cultivated, disciplined, but probably never completely recast. A wise teacher in homiletics will try to help a student discover and develop what is most individually his: something "given" in trust to both teacher and student. Within such frontiers—and they are ample—style can be trained.

Good style is therefore both a gift and an achievement, easier on the whole to attain in written than in spoken composition. To a certain extent a speaker's—or a writer's—style reflects the company he keeps. It is some distillation of one's reading and thinking. Some gift unconsciously received from the masters of speech and style, and held against the time of need: as though the mind were an alembic in which the habitual comradeship of the wise and the good were somehow transmuted into speech and thought.

Style is always a by-product, never an end in itself. Directly writing or speaking becomes style-conscious virtue is gone out from it; style has become the master, not the servant. There was Peter Forsythe. To use a phrase not current in his time, "he stole the show" at the Boston International Council in 1899. He had, he believed, a message which was the heart of the Christian Gospel—indispensable to the world. But his "style" became an obsession: he could say nothing either clearly or simply, it must be said brilliantly. It was like reading fireworks, one saw only scintillation against the dark.

* * *

Our own time seems to have gone to the other extreme. Critics of current literature note the amount of poor writing, the relative rarity of really distinguished writing. How far contemporaneous preaching reflects this want of concern for style —substituting therefore a way of getting it said as directly as possible—is neither easy nor safe to say. In general, contemporaneous preaching is not style-conscious, which is a good thing. But it may in the end be seen to have lacked that literary quality which has characterized great preaching in its great periods. In the seventeenth century contemporaneous literature was greatly influenced by preaching. The twentieth century is only middle-aged and has time to mellow its ways of speech and writing—but as yet our current preaching is probably more influenced by current ways of speech and writing than influential in bettering them. It is of course far easier to do something about

written than a spoken style, one can choose his words, cross out—and there is always the waste-basket. There are reproductions of some pages of Ruskin's manuscripts showing by what almost incredible toil he secured the rhythmic balance of his golden verbal web. Thinking through and trusting the mind to register in *its* magic web is another matter. It is well within the extempore speaker's power, but one has to trust the issue to his message content and the power of a disciplined mind to give it verbal form in the ardor of delivery. At any rate good preaching, read or spoken, should keep in mind its essential kinship to good literature and therein refresh itself.

* * *

It has been the policy of THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY to avoid as far as possible controversial issues. A minister's mail is burdened with controversial literature. His newspapers headline the quarrels of classes and nations and the very air teems with controversy. The broadcasting commentators who have their fifteen minutes to fill, whether or no, find the issues which divide us made to their order and they play their mischief-making discords upon the age-old chords of self-interest, prejudice and fear. All this has certainly contributed powerfully to the temper of a time in which mutual understandings and reconciliations seem almost impossible. This modest publication is quite willing to live and move and have its being in less over-heated regions.

This does not mean that the pulpit is in ivory tower, unreached and unshaken by the disorders of such a world as ours. It should be, on the authority of the prophet, a watch tower from which the preacher seeks to foresee the issues of policies and the invasion of forces hostile to his Gospel and portentous! In another figure he is to have a trumpet at his side and sound it for alarms. His really difficult question, never more difficult than now, is how to sound it. The American pulpit has always had a wisdom to advise in national crises and a part to shape and direct public affairs, which secular historians have been strangely slow in recognizing. It will do well, therefore, not to spend that power on side issues.

A wise book on preaching warns the pulpit against being "stampeded" by current issues, near or remote. For example: maybe a decade ago scientists noted what they thought a certain lawlessness in the behavior of atoms. Their actions seemed unpredictable and outside a rigid determinism. Whereupon some highly speculative theologians deduced from their behavior the freedom of the human will. There was for a little while quite a homiletic flurry about it. Einstein introduced us to "relativity," which, he said, only the mathematically elect could possibly understand. Thereafter, "relativity" became homiletically useful. Now relativity has been superseded by "the Atomic Age." Such matters belong to the specialists. They are perilous regions for the preacher.

The more specific perils of being "stampeded" are in nearer regions. There are always the forces of contemporary public opinion to be reckoned with. For some of them "public opinion" is an inadequate term. There have always been, and are now, profound and powerful movements reorienting human thought. Political philosophies, social and economic forms, creeds and theologies, have thus been recast. They are "epochs" for the historian. They redate the records of mankind—and so vast are their tides that those who are being carried by them have not always been conscious of what was happening to their world, nor been able to foresee where they are being taken—which may be true of our orders today.

Religion in its institutions and authorities has always in the end registered these epochal changes, though generally with reluctance and protest, religion being, by the very nature of it, both conservative and conserving. In Christian Europe and America they have always carried preaching with them—or else been inaugurated by preaching. Even the Latin Catholic,

the most change-resisting of Churches, has always finally in a fashion adjusted itself to these flowing tides and then conveniently forgotten that it ever did.

* * *

Epochal changes are one thing, if they are epochal. Excitements, hysteria, political and economic controversies are something else. If a critical historian of preaching should argue that preaching has generally supported the dominant social and economic interests of those who supported it, he could make a disconcerting case. American preaching for reasons which explain themselves has been particularly responsive and kind to the political, sectional and economic interests of its manifold constituency. American history, north, south, east and west, illustrates this superfluously, and much of it in detached retrospect has been no credit to anybody concerned.

On the other hand, there have been examples of prophetic vision and courage which echo trumpet-like across the years. Martin Luther was not the last who said, "Here I stand, God help me, I can do no other." Preachers for conscience's sake have taken no thought for unpopularity nor any consequences to themselves, defenders of justice and righteousness, Heralds of the Dawn.

And yet, it is not easy to stem the tides alone. There is little doubt which way the stronger tides of political, social and economic interests are now running. They are taking a perilous direction, they are certainly running counter to all the hopes and ideals of a Christian order. What can an individual preacher do? That is the most difficult challenge the pulpit faces today. Here, more than in any other region, the individual preacher needs the support of a Church which backs him both with wisdom and authority. All of which is, to end this too wandering editorial, leaving the most important question it raises hung up in the air. The Editor would welcome articles developing it more fully.

Meanwhile, as an example of what the pulpit, as a Christian watch tower, might say and how it might be said, the Editor commends Ralph Barton Perry's *The Logic of Peace* in the last December *Atlantic*.

* * *

To facilitate the publication of the QUARTERLY, all this has been written in a snow-mantled world where blossoms seem a dream. But it will be read in a blossom-mantled world. After all, If Winter comes, Spring can not be too far behind.

How to Use Assistant Ministers

The Rev. Theodore Ainsworth Greene

Pastor of the First Church of Christ, New Britain, Connecticut

AST November, Dr. Frederick L. Fagley sent the writer a letter. In this epistle he courteously request- an article for the May issue of *The inisters' Quarterly* upon the subject: ow To Use Assistant Ministers." In e same envelope, he enclosed the inute, passed at a meeting of the Com- ssion on the Ministry held in New rk on October 17th, 1947 as follows: "*Voted*: That Dr. Fagley ask Rev. T. Greene to prepare an article for the inisters' Quarterly on the relationship tween the Pastor and his Assistant or ssociate, with perhaps a suggestion of code for conduct, covering such rela- nship."

This being the directive handed down me from Olympus your servant has availed at his typewriter--late and long on a Friday preceding Palm Sunday to roduce something on the subject order- l, and what follows is the result.

I

Let us begin by stating that the writer as no illusions as to the possibilities for appiness in this relationship between astors and assistants. What has happen- l to me can happen to anybody, and ould happen to everybody, who serves n apprenticeship before he becomes imself a pastor. Playing second fiddle in church orchestra is good training for e production of heavenly harmony, nd good discipline in Christian living! I count myself most fortunate, upon raduation from Seminary, in having erved a term of six years and seven nonths as Assistant Minister in the Brick resbyterian Church of New York City rom 1918-1925. By some special provi- ence, Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin asked me after a class in preaching at Union Seminary about a month before Commencement, if I wanted a job. Although I was a son of the Manse, and about to be ordained to the ministry in the Broadway Tabernacle, no offers and no nibbles had come my way to date from any Congregational source whatsoever. For that reason, Dr. Coffin's interest in my then uncertain future served as a welcome surprise, and an answer to prayer after five long years of graduate study and preparation at Amherst College, Columbia University and Union Seminary. Within a week, an interview was arranged for me by Dr. Coffin with Dr. William Pierson Merrill, Pastor of the Brick Church, then located at Fifth Avenue and 37th Street. That interview ended in an invitation, which I accepted promptly. Norman Thomas and Frank Latimer Janeway were my immediate predecessors on the Staff. I came home from Labrador that Autumn after a second Summer as Secretary to Sir Wilfred Grenfell, and started my labors as Assistant Minister in the Brick Church, October 1st, 1918. More than six years later, I resigned that post May 1st, 1925 to accept a call to the pastorate of the First Church of Christ in the Hardware City of America—and by the Grace of God and the long-suffering patience of its people—I am still here.

For me, at least, those years from 1918-1925 constituted a most profitable apprenticeship for the ministry and a valuable experience in the team-work of a great and historic city Church, with Christ Church on the West side and the Church of the Covenant on the East side, together with Barbour House and the Brick Church Neighborhood House

as social centers. The guidance, patience and fellowship of Dr. Merrill through all those years remains, and will remain, among the most precious memories of my life. Dr. Merrill was an "elder brother" par excellence! He was my "father-in-God," a just, generous, understanding and kindly Christian gentleman! Watching him administer the Brick Church program; hearing him preach and pray and preside; observing his conduct of funerals and weddings; sitting beside him at such gatherings as the Presbytery of New York or the State Synod; visiting with the Merrill family at the parsonage on East 36th Street, I learned many a lesson at second hand, which will stand me in good stead to the end of my ministry. That apprenticeship was a happy and profitable experience for me because Dr. Merrill was first of all a *good man*, and second a *great minister* of Jesus Christ, a combination to be desired, but not always to be found in our profession.

II

Therefore the first article in any Code of Conduct for the proper use of Assistant Ministers, I could concoct from personal experience, must be this:

1. *Start With Being An Assistant Minister Yourself.* But, if and as you do so, be sure to pick the right man to assist!

And the second Article in this Code of Conduct is like unto the first.

2. *Select Your Own Assistants With Care and Discrimination.*

In this business, the Seminaries and the State Superintendents and our Pastor-Supply Offices in Boston and Chicago can furnish you today with pretty faithful transcripts and histories of almost any young man you are likely to consider. They have these candidates filed and photographed and well documented for your reference. I have learned, however, that many a character reference is as important for what he does *not* say, as it may be for what it *does* say. Therefore, my practice has never been to take any man "sight unseen." I have made an appointment with him in advance, and interviewed him and his wife personally. Then I have invited him to visit our Church; let him see me and my people at work; attend our Church Schools—both Sunday and Weekday—watching them in operation. This visit gives a young man the opportunity to become acquainted with your building, program, Staff and Committee.

After that visit, comes the next step and the next article in our Code.

3. *Make Your Contract With Every Assistant Definite and Businesslike.*

Set down in writing your agreement as to salary, vacation, days off duty, living arrangements, annuity payments, auto allowance, etc. Be equally definite concerning what you expect of him. Name his duties and responsibilities in relation to pulpit supplying, pastoral calling, the religious education budget and program, the work with young people, and with the Scout Troops. He wants to know what is expected of him, as well as what he may expect from you and the people. What is more, he can live up to his new responsibilities better, if he sees them clearly set forth, and has your contract on hand for reference and study.

Having agreed now upon terms and duties, and having taken the young man into Camp—as they say—the next article in your Code of Conduct must be:

4. *Give Him Full Responsibility In His Department and Trust Him To The Limit.*

By this method he will grow during the years of his service, and you will both be spared that sometimes painful process of watching each other, and of feeling that you are being watched. Don't nag, and don't ever criticize him in the presence of others. Let him see and feel that you are always there behind him to back him in all worthy efforts. If he fails to make good on the trust which you have

committed unto him, let him know about it, and seek the reason patiently and dispassionately. Be sure of this: No self-respecting young minister of ability will ever be satisfied to serve as your errand boy, nor even as your whipping boy! He has rights as well as you, and duties! What is more, his sojourn on your Staff can be made both useful and profitable, so long as you recognize those rights, and he, in turn, attends to his duties.

Again, if you want your Church program to keep up to date and growing, add this article to your Code of Conduct with Assistants:

5. *Encourage Him To Make Suggestions By Treating Him As A Partner In The Enterprise.*

It may be quite likely that not every suggestion he contributes will work out well in your parish. Nevertheless, let him get it off his chest! For who knows, some of his ideas may be better than any that have occurred to you. Therefore—as they say in the riding ring—"Give him his head." Let him try to put them into practice—once they have been approved by your Standing or Religious Education Committees, and allowance has been made for them in the Church budget. Churches and ministers alike learn and profit by the trial and error method. The past twenty two years have brought many changes in groupings, methods and procedures in our downtown city parish in this manufacturing city of Connecticut, and not a few of these changes have been for the better. In fact, some of our best ideas have come to us through the suggestions made in Staff and Committee meetings by our Assistant Ministers.

Again, if you want to have peace like a river in your program:

6. *Hold Regular or Occasional Staff Meetings With Your Assistants.*

For the first twenty years of my ministry in this Parish, we held Staff Meetings for the Pastor, Assistant Ministers and Church Secretary in my study at the Church on Tuesday mornings each week. Opening with brief devotions, led in turn by the three ministers, we have reviewed the work of the past week, surveyed the calendar for the coming week, answered each other's questions, and kept everybody informed about the whole program. This method helped us, I believe, to develope a First Church family feeling and loyalty in the Staff in spite of changes occurring across the years. There is a certain rhythmic sequence in the Church year, which follows both the clock and the calendar. Where adequate records are kept, and files are tended properly, a Staff soon senses that rhythm of activity, learns to anticipate and to prepare accordingly. This saves a lot of last-minute scrambling, turmoil and confusion.

Another way—the one I have been following of late—is to hold Staff conferences by personal contact with each individual member. This method takes more of the Pastor's time, to be sure, but I find it works out best when—as is sometimes the case in the very best of Church families—individual members of your Staff sometimes clash in personal relations. Whatever method you try, always let each member of the Staff know that your door is always open to them for conference, question, or appeal. Cultivate, therefore, a philosophy of interruptions— for they will be sure to come. Concentrate on each new visiter and problem as it arises. Forget the grievances and cranks and gossip that goes with it all—and press on to more important matters. In short make yourself not "the Big Boss," but more truly "the Friend-at-large" to everybody, Secretary, Sexton, Organist, Soloists, Church Officers, Parishioners—*and Assistants*! All this will take time, but, I can tell you, it will also pay dividends in peace and order.

And now for an Article in our Code concerning the Pastor personally.

7. *Aim To Set Always An Example In Humility And Loyalty To The Whole Work Of The Whole Church Family.*

As Pastor, you are the chief servant of the Church, but not its Master! This is not only the Christian way, but the Congregational way as well! One occasionally finds a young minister, breaking into Congregationalism from some more authoritarian denomination, who still labors under "illusions of grandeur" about his place as a minister. I have met one or two such young men in my experience. One such had some very lofty conceptions of his calling, being too proud to waste his time, at first, keeping records, typing stencils, or even undecorating the Christmas tree after New Year's. Now, no Church I have ever served has had all the help it needs at times in these mundane, routine, menial matters. What is more, I seem to recall, that Jesus Himself had to wash the disciples' feet before sitting down at table on the night of the Last Supper in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. And, as Pastor of the flock, you may have to "stoop to conquer," or perhaps even to rebuke in love such "illusions" by your own example. No Christian minister worthy of his salt and secure in his soul, will ever be too proud to do anything necessary in a pinch, whether it be helping the Sexton move a piano, or taking down the Christmas tree. If you are a good and faithful and humble minister of Jesus Christ, there is nothing that can demean you, and nothing you cannot do with dignity for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.

8. *Exercise In Your Relations With Assistants An Attitude Of Patience, Loyalty, Appreciation, And Fraternal Affection.*

I know that this—like other articles in our code—are easier said than done. Nevertheless, I find it works out well, when I succeed in following my own advice. To this end, I sit down some mornings and read again the 13th Chapter of First Corinthians for my own instruction. It helps me to remember that nobody can rule a city, serve a Church, or handle people and lose his temper in public or in private conference. It still "takes two to make a fight." There will, then, be no fighting on your Staff, so long as you mind your tongue and keep your temper. Loyalty to the Church *first*, and to every member of your Staff *second* is another "must" in the Pastor's code of good conduct with his Assistants. Nothing makes the Church wheels move so smoothly—inside the Staff and the Parish—as occasional, deserved expressions of appreciation and gratitude on your part for faithful service rendered. Therefore, let your gratitude be known, since it will not merely grease the wheels, but likewise warm the hearts, and strengthen the bonds that bind the whole Church together by meeting our Master's test for Christian character, when He said: "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one for another."

And now last, but not least:

9. *Keep Always In Mind The Fact That Someday Your Assistant Will Be Moving On To Larger Responsibilities Of His Own.*

The procession of life is always moving onward and upward.

Raising an Assistant is like raising a son. One has to learn in time that "he must increase" in power and strength, while you "must decrease." It is the law of life, and it saves us from all foolish jealousy, if we accept it as such. When your Assistant has learned "to keep in step with the band" and to march in time to the music of the spheres, he *should* be moving on to newer fields and greener pastures. This fact should be uppermost in your mind from the very outset of your relationship. As long as he serves on your Staff, he is a kind of graduate student in the ministry. But the time is coming when you must hand him his diploma, when he should have won his degree as a "Master of Arts" in the ministry, and graduate to a Church all his own. And, when that time arrives, you

must help him to seek and find a Parish for which his talents fit him. What is more, when that time comes, a good Pastor will do everything in his power to help and not to hinder that promotion. On the other hand, the right kind of an Assistant will give warning in advance of his intentions. Further still, the understanding Church and Pastor will aid and abet him in fulfilling his ambitions. We have had some real love feasts in this Church on the occasion of the departure of Assistant Ministers and their families over the past twenty years. Farewell receptions have been tended them. Valuable gifts have been presented, and words of sincere appreciation have been spoken by Pastor and people alike. In fact, almost nobody has ever left our Church family without some ceremony of recognition and appreciation. Common courtesy demands it. Christian practice suggests it. Therefore, whether your Assistant's term has been long or short, remember your Church manners, and send him on his way rejoicing!

III

Finally, lest I fail to practice what I preach, let me close this lesson on "*How To Use Assistant Ministers*" by paying my respects to those good men and true, who have held up my hands and helped immeasureably to carry the load across the years in the First Church of Christ, the oldest parish in New Britain. I count myself very fortunate in securing the help and keeping the loyalty during my Pastorate to date of the following ministers, who have served with me in the work of this historic parish:

Rev. Yervant Harry Hadidian, Ph.D. 1926—Aintab College, Hartford Seminary—Minister-at large to Connecticut Armenians.

Rev. Warren Mandeville Blodgett, M.S. 1925-27—Boston University, Union Seminary—Director of Young People's Work, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Rev. Alfred Dixon Heininger, B.D. 1927-32—Adrian College, Oberlin Seminary—American Board Missionary in China.

Rev. Charles Marvin Styron, S.T.B., 1932-34—Ohio Wesleyan, Union Seminary—Minister of the Community Church, Lincoln, Mass.

Rev. Robert Elmo Early, B.D., 1934-38—Iowa State College, Yale Divinity School—Pastor of a Methodist Church in Florida.

Rev. Bradley Fuller Skinner, B.D., 1938-41—Amherst College, Hartford Seminary, Pastor of Silver Lake Church, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio.

Rev. Sterling Saunders White, M.Ed., B.D., 1941-46 — Springfield College, Hartford Seminary, Pastor, Community Church, Elmwood, Conn.

Rev. Frank Milton Weiskel, M.A., B.D., 1946—Muhlenberg and Haverford Colleges, Union Seminary — Assistant Minister, First Church, New Britain.

For all their labors—each in his own way—we in this Parish are still truly grateful!

The Status of the Local Congregational Christian Church as Proposed in the Basis of Union

The Rev. Frederick L. Fagley
Director, Department of the Ministry

How would the Basis of Union affect the local church?

THE distinctive element in the Congregational Christian heritage is the local church, in which each member has his spiritual responsibility and the whole fellowship constitutes a self-governing body of followers of Jesus Christ. Consequently a central issue in the proposed union of our churches with the Evangelical and Reformed Church is whether the Basis of Union would safeguard the freedom and democracy of the congregation. Each church and each member must face this question. We here summarize some of the pertinent considerations as we see them.

The effort to unite two Christian fellowships with similar aspirations but differing traditions requires intelligent compromise, that is, some changes in the polity of both denominations. Do these changes jeopardize essential Congregationalism, or do they affect only non-essentials?

Adoption would not preclude revision in the Basis of Union, if 90 per cent of the General Synod agree, or in the proposed constitution of the United Church, if authorized by the General Synod in collaboration with the Conferences, Associations, and churches.

The autonomy of the local church.

The Basis of Union recognizes the full freedom of the congregation. "Each Congregation . . . has the right of retaining or adopting its own charter, constitution, by-laws, and other regulations which it deems essential and proper to its own welfare. This right includes the holding and operation of its own property." (III-H) "The freedom of worship and of education at present enjoyed by the Congregation . . . will be preserved in the United Church. Other freedoms at present enjoyed are not hereby abridged." (III-I) "The constitution . . . shall in no wise abridge the rights now enjoyed by congregations." (III-F) These commitments covering both the Basis of Union and the proposed constitution are central. The God-given freedom of the covenant fellowship is clearly acknowledged.

Is this freedom limited in the Basis of Union by the proposed grant of autonomy in their "own sphere"—to Associations, Conferences, and the General Synod? The categorical statements about the freedom of the congregation noted above offer assurance that the wider agencies of the churches may not invade the sphere of congregational autonomy.

The authority of the local church.

The essential democracy of our churches derives from the authority vested in the fellowship of the congregation under Christ, and in the responsibility of the wider agencies to the whole fellowship of congregations. Would the Basis of Union alter, in the proposed government of the United Church, this traditional democracy? The government would be "exercised through Congregations, Associations, Conferences, and the General Synod in such wise that the autonomy of each is respected in its own sphere, each having

own rights and responsibilities." (III-
The meaning of this section seems
arer when seen in the context of other
tions. "The basic unit of organization
. is the Congregation." (III-A) The
ngregations would as now directly or-
ize Associations (III-B), and consti-
e Conferences (III-C), and indirectly,
ough the Conferences, constitute the
neral Synod (III-D). While the Basis
Union does not specifically so state,
Associations and Conferences would
sumably be responsible to the Congre-
ions, and the General Synod to the
nferences, just as "officers, boards,
ncils, commissions, committees, depart-
nts, agencies, and instrumentalities
responsible to the bodies that elect
m." (III-E)

Furthermore, the proposed extension of
thority to the wider agencies of the
urches beyond that already delegated
present practice appears limited. "In-
vidual communicants have the right of
peal, complaint, or reference to their
ngregations, Associations, Conferences,
d ultimately to the General Synod. Min-
ers, Congregations, Associations, and
nferences have similar rights of appeal,
mplaint, or reference. Decisions ren-
red in consequence of such appeals,
mplaints, or references, are advisory,
t mandatory." (III-G) The advisory
aracter of these so-called "decisions"
uld not seem to negate the fundamental
inciple of our polity; they would not
ntravene the principle enunciated by the
anning Committee for the International
ngregational Council, "that in all the
ganization of the church at every level,
authority is spiritual or, as our fathers
t it, ministerial, not legalistic, coercive,
magisterial."

he responsibility of the laity.

The priesthood of all believers is an-
her guiding principle of Congregational
lity. It is reflected in the institution of
e church meeting, as the ultimate hu-
an authority in the church. Negatively,
is expressed in traditional fears over
a clergy-dominated church. The Basis of Union recognizes the responsible role of the layman. The democracy of the local congregation is clearly declared by Article III-H, cited above. The Associations are to be organized, and the Conferences constituted, by Congregations, "through their ministers and through delegates elected from their membership." (III-B, C) The General Synod likewise is to be constituted by Conferences, "through delegates elected by them from the membership and ministers of the Congregations." (III-D) This emphasis on equality within the church is also reflected in the principle of Article III-J: "Men and women enjoy the same rights and privileges in the United Church. It is recommended that at least one-third of the members of the national administrative bodies be women."

The freedom of the minister.

The direct relationship between pastor and congregation is a cherished part of our heritage. Two commitments of the Basis of Union are clear. "In all relationships between minister and local church or Congregation, the freedom of the minister and the autonomy of the church are presupposed." "Ministers and churches desiring to maintain a system of pastoral placement in which the Conference or Association shall have little or no part, shall be free to do so." (VI-C) The article also sets forth, however, a "recommended standard of denominational procedure" to be urged upon churches and ministers, involving approval by the Association or Conference before a minister is called or dismissed. What effect the proposed appeal to the ministers and Congregations might have on their freedom remains to be seen.

Similar "standard methods" are proposed for ordination and induction, namely, "by authority of the Conference or Association at the request of the Congregation." (VI-A) These are proposed, not for the interim period when current procedures would prevail, but as provisions in the constitution. The use of the terms

"standard" and "normal" in this connection seems by implication to preserve the right of the local church to call a council of the vicinage.

Membership in the local church.

Article VII provides that "men, women, and children shall be admitted into the fellowship of the United Church through baptism and profession of faith according to the custom and usage of each congregation prior to the union. When they shall have been admitted, they shall be recognized as members of the United Church." This last sentence makes it fairly clear that admission to the covenant fellowship of the local church would continue as heretofore, but would carry with it recognition of membership in the wider fellowship.

This Article also contains the statement that "all persons who are members of either communion at the time of the union shall be members of the United Church." This statement requires qualification, since in our communion each local church would need to decide whether to participate in the new fellowship. It means that all members would be carried over into the new fellowship unless their churches voted to sever their connection with it. The authority as to church membership resides in the congregation.

The local church and the merger procedure.

Since the Basis of Union would affect more than the administrative agencies of the two communions, the decision as to its adoption or rejection by our denomination is placed squarely upon the local churches. They alone have the authority to alter their own polity. If the General Council and Evangelical and Reformed General Synod declare the Basis of Union adopted, all churches of the two denominations will be included in the United Church unless by definite vote a church separates itself from the fellowship. Conscientious consideration of the issues by the largest possible number of churches is indispensable if the decision is to be democratic, and the existing fellowship of our churches conserved.

The General Council will necessarily have to assume authority in judging the mind of our churches with regard to the merger, since no authorized procedure has been established by the local churches. To aid the Council in reaching a judgment, Associations and Conferences as well as local churches have been asked to vote on the Basis of Union. While votes by the Associations and Conferences do not have the same status as votes by local churches, they will help the Council in estimating the sentiment of our churches. This does not lessen the importance, however, of action by every church.

The local churches have the final decision for our denomination as to the adoption of the constitution of the United Church, if and when it is presented. The Basis of Union provides that "the General Synod shall declare it [the constitution] in force when it shall have been ratified by not less than two thirds of the former Congregational Christian Churches *voting,* and by not less than two thirds of the former Evangelical and Reformed Synods." (IV-A) This formulation seemed necessary if a decision were to be reached at all. Its flexible character increases rather than decreases the importance of wholehearted participation by local churches, at every stage of the decision, that it may be as representative as possible.

Local churches will retain their own names, using the further title "United Church of Christ" if and as they desire.

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